

"Hey Arnold!" Chat with Craig Bartlett

MODERATOR: Hi everyone! Welcome to Nick.com's Blab-a-torium!

MODERATOR: Tonight we are having a special guest ...

MODERATOR: Craig Bartlett, the genius behind "HEY ARNOLD!"

MODERATOR: Get your questions typed and submitted so we can lay them on him as soon as he gets here!

MODERATOR: Send us your questions for Craig Bartlett—the man behind the FOOTBALL HEAD!

MODERATOR: Craig Bartlett the creator of "Hey Arnold!" will be here in the chat room soon!

MODERATOR: Hi everyone! If you are just joining us, tonight Craig Bartlett will be here!

MODERATOR: Craig Bartlett is the creator of "Hey Arnold!" YAY!

MODERATOR: Type your question in the text box and hit SEND!

Nick Yapper: Hey Everyone!! Are you ready to chat with Craig Bartlett?

MODERATOR: I am, Yapper!

MODERATOR: I can't wait! So get your questions ready for the Football Head himself, Craig Bartlett!

Nick Yapper: I know. I am such a big fan!!

Nick Yapper: I can't wait to hear what this guy has to say!!

MODERATOR: If you are just joining us, welcome to the Blab-a-torium!

MODERATOR: Just type your question in the text box and hit SEND!

Nick Yapper: Be sure to type your questions in the text box just below the chat window

Nick Yapper: Hey guys, I think we are about to get started

MODERATOR: Who can stump the expert of "Hey Arnold!"? Get ready cuz I think I hear him coming!

Nick Yapper: Craig Bartlett is in the building

Nick Yapper: He's just getting himself a cup of coffee and we will get going!!

Nick Yapper: He's here!!!

Nick Yapper: He's here!!

Nick Yapper: Hi Craig!!!

Craig Bartlett: Hi everyone!

MODERATOR: HI CRAIG!!

MODERATOR: Everyone, with us tonight is Craig Bartlett, the creator of "Hey Arnold!"

MODERATOR: Our first question tonight comes from ranidbay

randibay:What made you think of making Arnold's head football-shaped?

Craig Bartlett: When I first designed Arnold, he was made of clay...

Craig Bartlett: because I was animating the Penny Cartoons for"Pee-Wee's Playhouse"

Craig Bartlett: In those days I would pour out a big sheet of clay and cut shapes out like cookies..

Craig Bartlett: So the football shape was sort of like a cookie cutout and I thought it was funny!

MODERATOR: Craig, can you explain to us what you actually do to create "Hey Arnold!"?

Nick Yapper: Excellent question!!

Craig Bartlett: My job on "Hey Arnold!" mostly concerns the early parts and the later parts of making every cartoon...

Craig Bartlett: the beginning and the end of every cartoon.

Craig Bartlett: I work on the story and I'm one of the writers...

Craig Bartlett: and I direct the voice actors and I cut the voice tracks to length...

Craig Bartlett: then I hand out the show to the artists. I meet with them and talk about the scenes they are going to draw.

Craig Bartlett: First we record the voices then we do the storyboards

Craig Bartlett: then the show is drawn and goes overseas to be animated...later it comes back to me again.

Craig Bartlett: Then when it comes back I cut the picture to exactly 11 minutes...

Craig Bartlett: I sit with Jim Lang and we spot the show for music .

Craig Bartlett: I sit with the sound effects guys and we spot the sound effects for the show...

Craig Bartlett: then we go to a place in Hollywood where the final half hour tape is made..

Craig Bartlett: I always go to that because there might be some final detail we want to change.

Nick Yapper: I just LOVE the music!!!

Craig Bartlett: I would never miss that. My favorite parts of the whole process are making the final tape...

Craig Bartlett: and the beginning when we record the actors.

hiomannnn:What do Arnold and Gerald call their hand shake?

Nick Yapper: OOOH! a Stumper!!

Craig Bartlett: It's simply called their secret handshake

Craig Bartlett: and you can tell it's a secret handshake by the weird sound it makes .

Craig Bartlett: They do it different ways. Sometimes they link their hands and wiggle their thumbs...

Craig Bartlett: Sometimes they just hold their hands next to each other and wiggle their thumbs.

helgagp123:Do any of the characters relate to you?

Craig Bartlett: I'm Arnold, but there are some big differences.

Craig Bartlett: I have parents and I didn't grow up in a boarding house with my grandparents under a freeway...

Craig Bartlett: but Arnold is the conscience of the show, and I always think of what I would do if I were in the same situation Arnold is in.

Craig Bartlett: And then Helga is an amalgam of all the girls I loved or loved me when I was in grade school. Craig

Bartlett: Unrequited love is the main theme of the show!

Nick Yapper: I bet all the girls loved you, Craig.

MODERATOR: The next question is one that was sent to nick.com before the chat. Why does Harold have his belly button sticking out?

Craig Bartlett: Harold is a slob...

Craig Bartlett: and he's just that kind of a kid who would have a too-short t-shirt, and his belly button sticking out.

Craig Bartlett: Even when he wears a suit at his Bar Mitzvah he still has his belly button sticking out.

Nick Yapper: Awwâ€™it's just baby fat...

Nick Yapper: I think he'll grow out of it.

MODERATOR: corey_nick has a great question!

corey_nick:How come Helga never tells Brainy to get away?

Craig Bartlett: Well, Helga just thinks socking him should be enough!

Craig Bartlett: She's a girl of action.

Nick Yapper: She's my hero!!

Craig Bartlett: Helga for President!

MODERATOR: juliac is asking the question on all of our minds ...

juliac:What happened to Aronld's parents?

Craig Bartlett: Didn't she watch "Parent's Day"?

Nick Yapper: I did!

Craig Bartlett: "Parent's Day" introduces Arnold's parents to the audience...

Craig Bartlett: who they were and how they disappeared.

Craig Bartlett: The movie will continue the story

MODERATOR: And on a more personal note, from frisket ...

frisket:Hey, Craig, what's your favorite animated show online?

Craig Bartlett: I don't know about online, but my favorite animated show on TV is "The Simpsons.."

Craig Bartlett: It's the biggest influence on cartoon shows today because it's so well-written.

MODERATOR: I love this question from 105!

105:How does Arnold get his shirt on over his head?

Craig Bartlett: Well, he tends to put it on and then button it. He doesn't actually have to pull it over his head...

Nick Yapper: I always wondered that myself!!

Craig Bartlett: He pulls his sweater over his head in "Crush on Teacher."

Craig Bartlett: We also see him undress in "Helga's Parrot" but we cut away before it's too late...

Nick Yapper: I have a question, Craig... Nick Yapper: Why doesn't Brainy, who always finds Helga looking at the heart-shaped picture of Arnold, ever tell anybody?

Craig Bartlett: Brainy secretly loves Helga...

Craig Bartlett: cares about her so much that he won't tell her secret.

Craig Bartlett: It's his way of showing that he loves her.

Craig Bartlett: In the episode "Helgo on the Couch" he sort of proposes marriage to her...

Craig Bartlett: he offers her a little ring, a little gum machine ring.

Craig Bartlett: She just looks at it and chucks it over her shoulder.

MODERATOR: Craig, I think they're trying to stump you tonight! raccon186 asks a tough one

raccon186:Why is Gerald the Keeper of all the Legends?

Nick Yapper: Oooh, another Stumper!!

Craig Bartlett: Gerald's just a very good public speaker...

Craig Bartlett: and over the years the kids just unofficially made him the Teller of Urban Tales..

Craig Bartlett: Sid is the Gatekeeper...

Craig Bartlett: so Sid always introduces the urban legend, and introduces Gerald...

Craig Bartlett: and then Gerald tells it.

later66:What advice does your grandpa give you in real life?

Craig Bartlett: Both my grandpas have died, but when I was a kid, my grandpa would give me advice like Arnold's grandpa...

Craig Bartlett: like "never eat raspberries."

Craig Bartlett: Arnold's grandparents are like fantasy grandparents, the kind you wished you had.

Craig Bartlett: They're capable of doing anything, really physically fit...

Craig Bartlett: really smart and funny.

MODERATOR: Oh a hypothetical question from artluver...

artluver29:How do you think the show would differ if Arnold actually lived with his parents?

Craig Bartlett: That's a good question, I've been thinking about that.

Craig Bartlett: I think Arnold would probably move away and travel around the world...

Craig Bartlett: because that's what you see his parents do in "Parent's Day."

Nick Yapper: Well, that would be totally different!

koolgurl:Why is Helga always mean to Arnold when she likes him? And the first time she tried to be nice, HE was mean to HER!!!!!!

Craig Bartlett: Well, I have to defend Arnold...

Craig Bartlett: because she had been mean to him hundreds of times...

Craig Bartlett: by the time she was nice to him.

Craig Bartlett: But more importantly, the reason that Helga always acts mean to Arnold is that she feels she would die of embarrassment if the other kids knew her secret.

Craig Bartlett: I think it would be funny to do an episode where all the kids learn Helga's secret...

Craig Bartlett: and they just say "Duh!"

MODERATOR: Craig, we have a real stumper here that came in this week to nick.com ... it was asked ...I know Arnold's grandma's name is Pooky, but is that her real name?

Craig Bartlett: No, Pooky is her nickname...

Craig Bartlett: that's what grandpa calls her.

Craig Bartlett: Her real name is Gertrude..

Craig Bartlett: We see her name is Gerty when grandpa talks about meeting her as kids...

Craig Bartlett: in the episode "Girl Trouble."

Nick Yapper: That's right, the man behind that terrific Nicktoon, "Hey Arnold!" is chatting with us here on nick.com!

mariposa4: Why exactly are fourth-graders out in the city alone at night? Especially the episodes where Helga and Harold are left at the factory...or where four of them go to Chez Paris?

Craig Bartlett: The world that Arnold and the kids live in in "Hey Arnold!" is kind of an idealized and romantic world...

Craig Bartlett: where it's dangerous but it's safe...

Craig Bartlett: where the kids can go out at night and do all sorts of things...

Craig Bartlett: and be safe.

Craig Bartlett: It's our idea of an idealized urban world...

Craig Bartlett: where there's a real community and everybody cares about each other.

Craig Bartlett: I know there are episodes like "Mugged" which are about strangers in the city...

Craig Bartlett: so we sometimes deal with that.

Craig Bartlett: But mostly it's about the kind of world where kids can go out day or night...

Craig Bartlett: and pretty much do anything they want.

Nick Yapper: If you have a question for Craig Bartlett, type it into the text box below and hit send!!

MODERATOR: a background question now...

tutut: Where did Stinky live before he moved to Arnold's neighborhood?

Craig Bartlett: Good question. Stinky is from Arkansas.

Craig Bartlett: And we chose Arkansas because President Clinton's from there...

Craig Bartlett: his entire backstory is beautifully told in the episode "Stinky's Pumpkin"

Craig Bartlett: where we see him tell his whole family's story through the pictures on the wall.

Craig Bartlett: My favorite picture is his house being towed by a truck...

Craig Bartlett: they towed his house to Arnold's city.

MODERATOR: midget24 asks a very popular question...

midget24: Craig, will there ever be an episode where Arnold's last name is announced?

Craig Bartlett: Among the crew at "Hey Arnold!" the question of his last name has become kind of a joke...

Craig Bartlett: I didn't give him a last name

Craig Bartlett: because I thought calling him "Hey Arnold!" was more powerful...

Craig Bartlett: but there have been so many requests we thought we would just casually mention his name in the movie...

Craig Bartlett: and then just move on.

redberry92: Does Phoebe really have a crush on Gerald?

Craig Bartlett: Yes, and it's mutual!

Craig Bartlett: They've sort of been boyfriend and girlfriend ever since the first season.

Craig Bartlett: Their love is not unrequited.

Craig Bartlett: I guess that means it's requited!

Nick Yapper: That's sooo romantic!

123dalla: Why is Sid such a back-stabber?

Craig Bartlett: Sid's kind of a weasel..

Craig Bartlett: He's a sweet enough kid but he's sort of a coward and a wimp...

Craig Bartlett: and you can't count on him for much.

Craig Bartlett: He sort of cracks under pressure.

Craig Bartlett: But I really love Sid, he's one of my favorite characters.

Nick Yapper: Hey guys, if you're just joining us, we're chatting with Craig Bartlett, the creator of "Hey Arnold!"

gummi1197: Will Stoop Kid ever be in another episode?

Craig Bartlett: Good question!

Craig Bartlett: Stoop Kid makes a cameo in a couple of shows...

Craig Bartlett: "Cool Party" and we see him in the TV movie "Arnold Saves the Neighborhood"

Craig Bartlett: which will be our hundredth episode.

Craig Bartlett: So look for it in Spring 2001.

Nick Yapper: If you want to ask the original "Football Head" a question, just type it into the text box below this window and hit send!!

MODERATOR: And another stumper for ya, Craig!

nicktunlv: Where did Arnold get Abner from?

Nick Yapper: Abner is Arnold's Pig, right???

Craig Bartlett: Yes, Abner is Arnold's pig.

Craig Bartlett: I guess from the animal shelter. He saved Abner from being made into bacon!

Craig Bartlett: Abner shows up a lot more in the fifth season. he's sort of around the house nowadays.

Craig Bartlett: In the dinner scenes, he's under the table.

roxy92225:How can someone like me get started in cartoon drawing, like as a career?

Craig Bartlett: Nowadays there are a lot of colleges that teach animation.

Craig Bartlett: Los Angeles has a lot of schools that are excellent...

Craig Bartlett: including Cal Arts, USC, and UCLA...

Craig Bartlett: and New York and the other major cities as well.

Craig Bartlett: My main advice is to draw all the time.

Craig Bartlett: Get those blank notebooks and fill them with drawings.

Craig Bartlett: I used to like to carry blank books on the bus. and draw the people who got on the bus.

ertel1080:When did the show first start out?

Craig Bartlett: I made claymation "Arnold" shorts, short films ten years ago...

Craig Bartlett: but I first brought them to Nickelodeon in '93.

Craig Bartlett: I started work on the "Arnold" pilot in '94...

Craig Bartlett: and we got picked up to go to a series in '95.

Nick Yapper: WOW“has it been that long?! Time Flies!!

MODERATOR: Craig here's a stumper again from the mail we received! What's the name of the episode when Helga and Harold get lost at the chocolate factory?

Craig Bartlett: It's called "Buses, Bikes and Subways" and it's episode 75b!

nicktunlv:Will you ever show Mr. Smith's face?

Craig Bartlett: I don't think so...

Craig Bartlett: I have a feeling Mr. Smith flew away in that helicopter...

Craig Bartlett: in the episode "Door 16" and was never heard from again.

Craig Bartlett: Or maybe he still lives in the boarding house.

Craig Bartlett: He's very mysterious.

Craig Bartlett: He still pays his rent. He's a very weird guy.

dramagirl2:Have you ever considered doing a live television show?

Craig Bartlett: Yeah, it would be fun.

Craig Bartlett: I had a dream once I was in Arnold's actual room...

Craig Bartlett: and it was perfect in every detail...

Nick Yapper: He has the coolest room!!

Craig Bartlett: and I thought I must be in an Arnold movie!

Craig Bartlett: The only problem is I don't know how we'd cast someone to play Arnold...

Craig Bartlett: because of the football head!

dunkin316:Craig, what is your favorite episode?

Craig Bartlett: That's tough.

Craig Bartlett: I guess I'd have to say "Parent's Day."

MODERATOR: My favorite one was "Pigeon Man". I loved that!

Craig Bartlett: But I'm also very fond of "Helga on the Couch.

Craig Bartlett: "Pigeon Man" is great!

Craig Bartlett: I even love the very first one we ever made, "Downtown as Fruit."

Nick Yapper: I like the one with the Parrot!

Nick Yapper: The one that recites Helga's poem!!

Craig Bartlett: That's "Helga's Parrot."

Nick Yapper: Craig Bartlett, the creator of "Hey Arnold!" will only be with us for another 10 minutes, so send us your questions!!!

krisbecool:Who was Arnold's first friend?

Craig Bartlett: Gerald. All of the kids in "Hey Arnold!" met in pre-school.

Craig Bartlett: It was instant friendship.

Craig Bartlett: They even did their secret handshake in pre-school.

Craig Bartlett: They're all friends for life.

knickknack:Who is the oldest out of the kids?

Craig Bartlett: Out of the immediate group, Harold is the oldest...

Craig Bartlett: He's been held back a lot.

Craig Bartlett: He's 13, as we learn in "Harold's Bar Mitzvah."

Craig Bartlett: It's not that he's stupid, he just doesn't apply himself.

Nick Yapper: I had the same problem, but I got over it!!

joe1990:Are all of the kids who do Arnold's...Helga's...etc. voices nice?

Craig Bartlett: Yeah, they're great!

Craig Bartlett: I love going to record them...

Craig Bartlett: because they're so much fun to hang out with.

Craig Bartlett: Some of them I've known for 6 years.

Craig Bartlett: Franny and Jamil have been with the show since the pilot.

dontknow:How old is Arnold's grandma?

Craig Bartlett: Arnold's grandma is about a year older than Arnold's grandpa...

Craig Bartlett: and he's 81 so she must be 82.

Craig Bartlett: Only a few weeks older. In "Parent's Day" Arnold says she's the oldest.

MODERATOR: Another one from mail at nick.com this week... What does it feel like having the cartoon you made up on television?

Craig Bartlett: It's great!

Craig Bartlett: It's a dream job.

Craig Bartlett: It's the most fun I've ever had.

martian64:How did Gerald get the hairstyle he has today?

Nick Yapper: Five more minutes, Folks!! Craig will be answering just a few more questions!!

Craig Bartlett: He started combing it up right away.

Craig Bartlett: He had the same hairstyle in pre-school...

Craig Bartlett: so I figured as soon as he had hair, he started combing it up.

Craig Bartlett: He doesn't need any hair care products--it's natural!

mather1:Why doesn't Arnold ever take his hat off?

Craig Bartlett: It's come off a couple of times but it's been really bad when it comes off.

Craig Bartlett: Helga steals it from him in "Arnold's Hat"

Craig Bartlett: and it falls off in "Stuck in a Tree."

Craig Bartlett: It's really bad when the hat comes off...

Craig Bartlett: because he almost has a bald spot.

Craig Bartlett: The reason the hat is so important to Arnold is that his parents gave it to him when he was a baby.

MODERATOR: Craig we've enjoyed having you here with us tonight! Can you tell us all about some of your upcoming projects?

Craig Bartlett: Two things I'm working on right now...

Craig Bartlett: a spinoff called "The Patakis" about Helga and her family,

Nick Yapper: Ooh!! Inside scoop!!

Craig Bartlett: and Helga's 15 years old.

Craig Bartlett: It would be an original show for Nick at Nite!

Craig Bartlett: The other project is the Arnold movie...

Craig Bartlett: We've been writing the script and are waiting for Paramount to give it the go-ahead.

Craig Bartlett: I'm currently finished episodes 90 to 100 of "Hey Arnold!"

Nick Yapper: 100, that's huge!!

Craig Bartlett: The last 3 episodes are a TV movie...

Craig Bartlett: called "Arnold Saves the Neighborhood."

Craig Bartlett: And the amazing thing is Helga tells Arnold her secret!

Nick Yapper: Omigosh!!!

MODERATOR: Craig, before you leave, can you show me the secret handshake?

Craig Bartlett: Here's the secret handshake! It looks like this:

Craig Bartlett: lol

Nick Yapper: Wow, this is great info! Thanks, Craig.

MODERATOR: Thanks again for joining us tonight! It was great talking with Craig Bartlett, the creator of "Hey Arnold!"

Craig Bartlett: Bye everybody!

Nick Yapper: Yeah, Craig! You were a great chatter!!

MODERATOR: Don't forget to come back next week when we have our favorite undersea characters .. SPONGEBOB AND PATRICK!

MODERATOR: Next Thursday, July 13th at 7pm ET !! Join us then!

Nick Yapper: Thanks for joining us!!

Craig Bartlett: Stay tuned! Keep watching. Thanks for the cards and letters!

Nick Yapper: BYE CRAIG!!!

Nick Yapper: And Craig Bartlett has left the building!!

MODERATOR: :::practicing the handshake:::

Nick Yapper: Thanks for joining us, everyone!

Nick Yapper: Please come back next week and chat with SpongeBob and Patrick!!!

Nick Yapper: You've been a wonderful audience!

MODERATOR: Yapper that was great!! Craig Bartlett was FUN!

MODERATOR: Thanks everyone for coming tonight!

Nick Yapper: Transcripts will be available for all nick.com chats in the Blab area...

Nick Yapper: These are coming SOON!!

Nick Yapper: gnight!

MODERATOR: Folks...this room is closed now. It's time to exit please. Come visit us next Thursday evening at 7pm ET for a chat with SpongeBob and Patrick from "SpongeBob SquarePants!" See ya then